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Chairman: Mr. Niculescu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)

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00-27456 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 99: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*) (A/54/56, A/54/97-E/1999/52, A/54/170, A/54/171-E/1999/111 and A/C.2/54/5)

(a) Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (A/54/389)

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(g) Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/54/94-S/1999/518 and A/54/328)

1. **Mr. González** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Central American Group, consisting of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, supported the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. International migration was a social phenomenon that had a significant influence on the development of the countries of Central America. In the 1980s there had been a considerable increase in migration flows in Central America, mainly as a result of the intensity of conflicts and politico-social violence at that time. Nevertheless, in the 1990s those migration flows had persisted, but the causes had changed, since the region was now immersed in a democratic process characterized by respect for the state of law and more participatory democracy. Unfortunately, that process had been affected by the destructive force of recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Mitch and Hurricane Georges, which had caused enormous losses, estimated at between $7 billion and $10 billion, and had caused the deaths of at least 10,000 people.

3. On the other hand, it should be recognized that migration flows contributed to the financial stability of the region through family remittances. Two aspects should be borne in mind: on the one hand, such remittances made it possible for thousands of families to weather certain disturbances in the economy and labour market of the region, and, on the other, they gave rise to the counterproductive phenomenon of encouraging the unproductive consumption of luxury goods and services.

4. In view of the fact that migration flows had increased since the end of the cold war and were possibly proliferating, the delegations of the Central American Group emphasized the need to improve statistics on international migration in order to determine those flows with greater precision, supervise the gradual changes they were undergoing and provide Governments with a sound basis for the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. In that regard, they expressed their appreciation for the work done by the United Nations Statistical Commission together with other international and regional organizations.

5. In collaboration with other countries of the hemisphere, including Canada, the United States, Mexico, Belize, Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Peru, the countries of the Central American Group were carrying out activities in the area of international migration through the Regional Conference on Migration, and that work had received the support of various competent agencies of the United Nations system.

6. The delegations of the Central American Group also agreed that the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development was an important initiative. The experience gathered at the Regional Conference on Migration could be a positive contribution. It was also important that the international community should continue considering the linkage between international migration and development from the common viewpoint of the countries of origin, transit and destination. Especially with regard to the countries of origin and destination, ongoing consideration should be given to questions such as remittances and their socio-economic effects,

the effects of migration and its links with development, with special reference to women, the linkage of migration with economic integration processes, free trade treaties and cross-border cooperation and the relationship between migration and natural resources management, particularly environmental degradation issues and their impact on the generation of migration flows.

7. **Ms. Odinga** (Kenya) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. With regard to sub-item (a), she emphasized the problems that had held up the fulfilment of the commitments set forth in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. Owing to the rapid transformation of the global economy in the past decade, most developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, had seen their growth rates decrease; levels of official development assistance had continued to decline; and the external debt of those countries had reached unsustainable levels. In the circumstances, it was essential that, with the collaboration of the United Nations and the competent specialized agencies, programmes of action and policies should be collectively formulated with a view to overcoming the current obstacles impeding development.

8. With regard to sub-item (b) it should be emphasized that, in spite of the efforts made since the convening of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to improve the quality of life worldwide, human settlement conditions were continuing to deteriorate because of the socio-economic difficulties faced by many countries and the constant rural to urban migration. In view of the disturbing prognostications made regarding the growth of the world population and the availability of infrastructure and services, the provision of adequate shelter must remain a priority theme of the Habitat Agenda. It was also necessary to bear in mind the rural dimension of human settlements, since a large proportion of the population of the developing countries still lived in rural areas, and to consider the relationship that existed between rural and urban sectors, which should be mutually supportive with a view to the attainment of sustainable development.

9. Kenya welcomed the idea of organizing two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance. In view of the precarious financial situation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), she hoped that adequate funds could be found to finance them. She also trusted that pledges would be paid up and contributions increased so as to launch the envisaged activities and ensure the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. She also supported the revitalization process and the new strategic vision and hoped that they would enable the Centre to respond to human settlement challenges and embark on more fruitful work in the new millennium.

10. Her delegation welcomed the preparatory work for the special session of the General Assembly aimed at an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the results of Habitat II. She hoped that the least developed countries could participate more actively in the continuation of that process and welcomed the inclusion of representatives of local authorities and other partners. Kenya looked forward greatly to participating in the debate in the coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda, which was the theme selected for the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2000.

11. Kenya supported the recommendations contained in the report on the environment and human settlements (A/53/463) and, in particular, urged the Secretary-General to appoint a full-time executive director to deal with the increasingly complex demands of human settlements. She was concerned that the excellent conference facilities of the United Nations Office at Nairobi were being underutilized. That Office should have the same status as the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The establishment of a permanent interpretation service in the Office would facilitate the convening of a larger number of meetings by the United Nations system and regional organizations. Adequate financial resources should also be provided for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/187, to enable it to discharge its mandate effectively.

12. With regard to sub-item (g) Kenya endorsed the conclusions of the first high-level dialogue on the social and economic impact of globalization. That dialogue should be conducted in a positive environment and in accordance with the broad-based goals and objectives agreed on in the Agenda for Development adopted by the General Assembly in

1997. She supported the proposal that the theme for the second high-level dialogue should be "Responding to the challenges of globalization: strengthening regional cooperation and building new partnerships for development". On the threshold of the new millennium, the dialogue on international partnership for financing for development should be focused on the eradication of poverty.

13. **Mr. Awori** (Uganda) said that he fully supported the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In-depth consideration should be accorded to the conclusions of the Secretary-General contained in his report on sub-item (a) (A/54/389), inasmuch as there was now a greater risk of the weaker members of the international community being marginalized and the development process of the 1990s had not been fully responsive to social needs as defined in the Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. That showed the need to review the Strategy and establish new targets that would reflect present realities.

14. With regard to sub-item (b) Uganda was prepared to participate actively in the review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The participation of local authorities and other concerned partners would greatly facilitate the implementation of that outcome. Furthermore, that review should assist in strengthening the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The work of the Centre should reflect the reality of the least developed countries, such as Uganda, in which the majority of the population lived in rural areas. Approaches that promoted the utilization of locally accessible construction materials and technologies were of the utmost importance. Moreover, Uganda doubted that rapid urbanization was the key to sustainability with regard to human settlements, because that process might have negative consequences, particularly in the poorest countries.

15. With regard to sub-item (d), Uganda agreed with the statement in the Secretary-General's report (A/54/408) that the Internet was central to the development process and that the international community was increasingly moving towards a new paradigm that showed development as transformation of the whole society. Unfortunately, the gap between the rich and the poor nations was widening exponentially, and the latter had increasingly fewer opportunities for access to scientific and other knowledge and to the technologies they needed in order to compete on international markets. Although they were seeking to break through the vicious circle of poverty, the rules of the game placed them at a disadvantage, because they were dependent not only on their own efforts but on the external economic environment.

16. In order for the poorer developing countries to be able to enjoy the benefits of the information age, it would be necessary to bridge the gap in human resources development. The cooperation of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the Governments of the countries concerned, particularly in the sector of education, could contribute to the efforts of those countries to exploit their human capital.

17. With regard to sub-item (g), Uganda emphasized that the phenomena of globalization and liberalization and the advances of science and technology, which had radically transformed production and the dynamics of the international economy, made it necessary to continue the dialogue in order to ensure a better world for all in the next century. It was therefore necessary to reaffirm the importance of renewing the dialogue on the strengthening of international cooperation for development, bearing in mind the conclusions of the meetings mentioned in the Secretary-General's note on the items for the second phase of that dialogue. In that regard, he drew attention to a meeting not mentioned in the note, namely, the debate on African development, to be held in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

18. **Mr. Al-Kadhe** (Iraq), referring to sub-item (e), endorsed the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and welcomed the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development. At the same time, that conference should not rule out the convening of other regional meetings on the issue, which might enrich the global dialogue.

19. Iraq had formerly been a host country for immigrants. Between 1975 and 1990 it had received a large number of immigrants not only from Arab countries. Nevertheless, that trend had been totally reversed since the embargo, which had caused the deterioration of the industrial and agricultural sectors, made it necessary to suspend public and private

projects, increased unemployment, lowered the standard of living of the population and increased poverty. In addition to those immigrants who had left the country for lack of work, Iraq had lost highly qualified personnel, such as physicians, engineers and teachers, whom neighbouring countries had not been able to absorb adequately.

20. If the international community was really interested in resolving the problems of international migration, it should begin by eliminating the obstacles that a State was placing in the way of Iraq's development and lift the embargo that had been weighing on it for the past nine years.

21. **Mr. Abdul Aziz** (Malaysia) endorsed the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 99 and, with regard to sub-item (d), welcomed the fact that in the report on developing human resources for development (A/54/408) the Secretary-General had mentioned two important initiatives adopted in Malaysia for entering on the information age, an age in which human capital would be a factor of crucial importance.

22. The first of those initiatives was the Multimedia Super Corridor, with which Malaysia hoped to attain the targets of its "Vision 2020" programme. That initiative would also help Malaysian as well as international enterprises to utilize the most advanced technologies. In that corridor, which was 15 kilometres wide and 50 kilometres long and linked the Kuala Lumpur centre with the main international airport of the region, two of the world's first Smart Cities were being built. Two hundred and twenty-eight firms had been built there, of which 187 were already in operation and employing almost 10,000 highly skilled workers.

23. The second initiative was the convening in Kuala Lumpur in March 2000 of the second Global Knowledge Partnership conference on the theme "Building Knowledge Societies: Access-empowerment-governance". The conference would be particularly concerned with the ever-widening gap between the information-rich and the information-poor countries, as well as the development problems rendered acute by that gap. In that context, the Government of Malaysia and the other members of the Partnership would do everything possible to find collective solutions for those problems. It would also create opportunities to facilitate access to information technology and communications, particularly access for the developing countries. The conference would help those countries to adapt to change and utilize the new technology.

24. The agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme should ensure that the developing countries were adequately represented at that meeting. The United Nations had an important role to play in assisting those countries not only to gain access to information and communication on technologies but also to institutionalize and utilize them efficiently.

25. **Mr. Zarie Zare** (Islamic Republic of Iran) endorsed the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 99. With regard to sub-items (d) and (a), he emphasized that human resources development should be an integral and priority part of any strategy to promote sustainable economic growth in the developing countries and that adequate resources should therefore be allocated in national budgets so as to make adequate social services more accessible to the population as a whole. Strategies had been formulated that focused more on the people and promoted their participation, and new technologies offered new opportunities to promote utilization of their potential and development of human resources.

26. For the orientation of future human resources development activities, it was necessary to define objectives and the means of attaining them. It was also necessary to bear in mind the forces that influenced such development. Globalization was the dominant force influencing relations among nations, peoples and economies and would undoubtedly influence the definition of those objectives. Globalization had had prejudicial consequences, above all for the developing countries; instead of promoting integration, it had promoted fragmentation, because the gap between countries and regions participating in that process and those excluded from it was widening.

27. As was well known, those countries that had been successful in integration into the world economy and in expanding trade and attracting more investment had made great progress with regard to human resources development, the eradication of poverty and raising the living standards of their population. If the inequalities between North and South increased, the developing

countries would have even fewer opportunities to mobilize resources with which to develop their human capital. Consequently, one of the fundamental objectives of development of their capital should be the provision of services and the creation of a favourable environment to enable the population of those countries to enjoy better living conditions and acquire the knowledge essential to compete on international markets.

28. The potential of the new information and communication technologies should be tapped for the promotion of human development and the eradication of poverty, as well as to enhance the capacity of developing countries for integration into the world economy. Those technologies were becoming an important factor for the international division of labour, which determined the competitiveness of national economies in various sectors. Moreover, gaps within countries could be reduced, so that disadvantaged groups could be brought into the mainstream life of the society.

29. With regard to sub-item (a) many of the principles set forth in the Declaration on International Economic Development were still highly relevant, particularly those relating to the integration of the developing countries into the world economy. The six interrelated goals in paragraph 14 of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade were also still valid. Nevertheless, during the past decade the majority of those countries had been prejudiced by the process of globalization or had been marginalized, and even those who had benefited had also suffered major setbacks. In view of the correlation between economic growth and social development, it had become clear beyond doubt that sustained social development could not be achieved without sustained economic growth. Accordingly, the international community should reaffirm its adherence to the principles of the goals set forth in the Declaration and the Strategy in order to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits of the process of globalization.

30. **Mr. Prendesgast** (Jamaica), referring to sub-item (d), said that he fully supported the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Investment in human resources was also of crucial importance for the attainment of sustainable development. The countries of the Caribbean region took their responsibilities in that area very seriously. Recently the University of the West Indies, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had organized a seminar on human resources development, capacity-building and the eradication of poverty, at which innovative human resources development strategies had been considered and the crucial importance of education for meeting the challenges of globalization had been reaffirmed. The Government of Jamaica, for its part, recognizing that the country should acquire the necessary capacity to meet the challenges of the information age, had given priority to human resources development in its national industrial plan.

31. Since globalization had emphasized the need to adopt new approaches with regard to human resources development, Jamaica welcomed the fact that the United Nations system was promoting new forms of cooperation among developing countries with a view to facilitating, in particular, their access to information and communication technology. It could not be overemphasized that the United Nations had an important role to play in that regard. In Jamaica, UNDP was providing the Government with assistance in implementing the programme to make universal access to information technology available in public places throughout the country.

32. The huge disparities that still existed in the countries and regions of the world signalled the need to take into account the various levels of development and continue applying traditional methods together with new approaches to human resources development. In that regard, the United Nations and its agencies should adopt a global approach; they should also be flexible and bear in mind the complexities of the socio-economic, cultural and political environment of each country. Investments in training and education and in health and nutrition should continue within the framework of strategies including goals of equity, poverty eradication and sustainable human development. There was an urgent need to adopt stronger policies, particularly in the field of social protection, to enhance international cooperation and to have the continued support of the United Nations so that remote and disadvantaged communities could be brought into the global network. It was also necessary to strengthen collaboration among Governments, the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organizations. For Jamaica, which had benefited from cooperation with the United Nations,

the role that the Organization was playing in the development of human resources remained valid and must be maintained. It should have the necessary financial resources for that purpose.

33. **Ms. Narangua** (Mongolia), referring to sub-item (a) associated herself fully with the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and expressed her agreement with the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/389). Rapid changes, growing globalization and interdependence were affecting most of the countries of the world. The Government of Mongolia was determined to attain the goal of sustainable development. In view of the importance for the developing countries of market stability and the liberalization of trade, the speedy and full implementation of the Agenda for Development (A/RES/51/240, annex) was needed. Trade was of great importance for development, the reduction of poverty and global economic recovery. A fair trading system was the most effective way of promoting the goals of development. The next round of trade negotiations should deliver appropriate substantial benefits for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. That would require improved market access and further reduction of trade barriers.

34. Mongolia, like many other landlocked developing countries, had its development impeded by high transportation costs, which in many cases came to 40 per cent of the total costs. Mongolia hoped that the international community, which was aware of the difficulties faced by those countries, would provide it with practical assistance in integrating into the world economy. In future reports on international cooperation and development, the situation of that group of countries should be considered and the means of overcoming the special problems facing them reflected. The lowering of transit costs and trade barriers would be the most efficient way of helping them. Financial assistance might be used mainly for building a transport infrastructure in those countries or modernizing an existing one.

35. Since the most pressing issue for developing countries still remained the financing of developing, the next high-level intergovernmental meeting on the question was of great importance. For the countries that were still to a large extent dependent on official development assistance, it was important that the flows of resources for that purpose should increase. It was also necessary that the United Nations should strengthen its links with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other competent institutions. The development policies and activities of those institutions should not duplicate each other but should be complementary.

36. The coordination and implementation of the decisions and recommendations of United Nations conferences on economic and social issues of global scope were of critical importance for alleviating problems in the economic and social sectors. She hoped that the conference to consider the results of Habitat II would be instrumental in that regard.

37. Lastly, she emphasized that the causes of most environmental programmes had their origins in the development process and that it was only through better management that they could be resolved.

38. **Mr. Murat** (Haiti) supported the statement made by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Alliance of Small Developing Island States. At the conferences held during the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which was almost at its end, the international community had reached a consensus with regard to the means of achieving development; nevertheless, the problems of poverty, economic marginalization and illiteracy were still weighing on mankind. Although the principles enshrined 10 years earlier in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation remained in full force, the attainment of the objectives of the Declaration depended on the integration of all States into the global economic systems. Accordingly, the increase in the gap between the countries of the North and the South and the decline in official development assistance was disturbing. It was therefore necessary to strengthen cooperation arrangements for development at the global level.

39. With regard to sub-item (e), the process of economic globalization and trade liberalization had created new links between States and had increased migration flows. Migration, which was not necessarily a negative phenomenon, since it could offer peoples the opportunity to share their culture, experience and knowledge, required high-level organization and planning. Haiti invited the international community, the regional groupings and the international authorities to enter into a dialogue on that fundamental issue so that

both countries of destination and those of origin of migration flows could benefit from the positive aspects of migration and reduce its negative effects to a minimum. Consequently, he supported the convening of an international conference on international migration, which could promote a constructive dialogue leading to a convergence of interests.

40. Haiti, which in the past had been the country of destination of waves of immigrants and was currently the country of origin of many workers dispersed throughout the American continent, reaffirmed its conviction that the solution to the problem of international migration lay in the establishment of a more balanced international economic order that could guarantee stability and prosperity for all.

42. **Mr. Chamie** (Director, Population Division), said, in response to some of the comments made on the subject of international migration and development, that, firstly, it was essential to continue the work of collecting, compiling and analysing international migration statistics in order to be able to establish current and future levels and trends. To that end, Member States should continue to collect and publish data and information on the subject. Without sound and up-to-date statistics on international migration in all its dimensions, it would be extremely difficult to have meaningful discussions on policy responses to issues related to international migration and development.

42. Secondly, international migration was a complex phenomenon that needed to be viewed in the broad context of population change and development. For example, at the present time the world population had reached 6 billion, but at the beginning of the century, the world population had been only about 1.6 billion, and by 2050 it would reach almost 9 billion. The dynamics of population change and development varied across regions; in some the size of the population was declining, while in others it was increasing. Changing age structure and the composition of the labour force, combined with changes in production and consumption patterns in the globalized economy would have a direct bearing on the question of international migration flows.

43. Thirdly, approximately one third of all countries, both developed and developing, now had migration policies designed to lower immigration, while only 20 years earlier only 6 per cent of countries had had such policies.

44. Fourthly, Governments had recently found common ground on certain aspects of international migration and development, for example, the trafficking of migrants, especially women and children; respect for the rights and interests of Governments and the rights of migrants; management of regular and irregular migration flows; and the need for greater cooperation among Governments on the various dimensions of international migration and development.

45. Lastly, according to the most recent projections, international migration flows would continue well into the twenty-first century, and that trend would be highly relevant for development efforts of countries and regions. Although the prospects for convening an international conference on international migration and development in the near future appeared slim, it should not be ruled out, in view of the importance of the issue and its political sensitivity.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.